

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 to 41 (canceled).

Claim 42 (currently amended): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

- (a) receiving a wager from a player, the wager corresponding to a plurality of credits;
- (a)(b) indicating a balance of the credits, the balance receiving a value total associated with a player, said value total being divisible into a plurality of fees, each one of the fees including at least part of one of the credits;
- (c) activating a game session for a game for an activation period, the activation period being divisible into a plurality of time intervals;
- (d) during the activated game session:
 - (1) receiving a plurality of play inputs from the player;
 - (2) in response to each one of the play inputs:
 - (ib) providing the player with an opportunity to perform performing at least one a play of the at least one game; and
 - (ii) providing at least one of a plurality of different outcomes based on the play, at least one of the outcomes corresponding to an award, the award having a value; for a period of time, the period of time being divisible into a plurality of time intervals, the at least one play involving a chance to receive at least one of a plurality of awards, each one of the awards having a value;
 - (e) tracking how many of the time intervals pass during the at least one play of the game;

- (3d) for each one of the time intervals, deducting one of the fees from the balance value total for each one of the time intervals which passes, the deduction being independent of the play inputs and the any game outcomes; and
- ~~(e) tracking a balance, the balance being based on the value total minus the deducted fees;~~
- (4f) for each one of the provided outcomes which corresponds to one of the awards, adding the value of the any received award to the balance, the added value extending the activation period of the game session;
- (e) determining which one of a plurality of events occurs first, the events including:
 - (1) a termination input received from the player; and
 - (2) the balance falling below a minimum level required for playing the game;
- (f) continuing the activation of the game session until the determined event occurs; and
- ~~(g) as long as the balance remains above a level after the termination event occurs, determining whether any payout is due to the player based on the balance; and~~
- ~~(gh) providing a payout to the player in response to the termination input being received when providing the determined payout, if any, to the player the balance is above zero.~~

Claim 43 (currently amended): The method of Claim 42, wherein for each time interval, said fees deducted from the value total are equal to each other.

Claim 44 (previously presented): The method of Claim 42, wherein each time interval is an equal interval of time.

Claim 45 (cancelled).

Claim 46 (currently amended): The method of Claim 42, which includes indicating the determining and displaying at least one payout, ~~associated with at least one displayed outcome for at least one play of the game if the balance is greater than zero after the plurality of time intervals, wherein said determined payout is based on the balance.~~

Claim 47 (currently amended): The method of Claim 42, which includes: (a) receiving a pause input during the game session; and (b) stopping the deducting step at least temporarily in response to the pause input~~during the play.~~

Claim 48 (withdrawn): A method of operating a gaming system, said method comprising:

(a) displaying to a player a graphical indicator of an amount of time the player is eligible to play a game;

(b) displaying to the player a decrease in said amount of time the player is eligible to play the game, wherein said displayed decrease is based on an amount of elapsed time;

(c) if the player inputs a value amount, displaying to the player an increase in said amount of time the player is eligible to play the game; and

(d) if the graphical indicator indicates that the player is eligible to play the game and a random determination occurs to trigger the game, determining and displaying a displayed outcome for said triggered game.

Claim 49 (withdrawn): The method of Claim 48, which includes displaying the amount of time the player is eligible to play the game as a group of bars.

Claim 50 (withdrawn): The method of Claim 48, which includes displaying a first amount of time the player is eligible to play the game a first color and displaying a second amount of time the player is eligible to play the game a second, different color.

Claim 51 (currently amended): A gaming system comprising:

at least one display device;

at least one input device;

at least one processor; and

at least one memory device which stores a plurality of instructions, which when executed by the at least one processor, cause the at least one processor to operate with the at least one display device and the at least one input device to:

- (a) receive a wager from a player, the wager corresponding to a plurality of credits;
- (ba) indicate a balance of the credits, the balance ~~receive a value total~~ associated with a player, said value total being divisible into a plurality of fees, each one of the fees including at least one of the credits;
- (c) activate a game session for a game for an activation period, the activation period being divisible into a plurality of time intervals;
- (d) during the activated game session:
 - (1) receive a plurality of play inputs from the player;
 - (2) in response to each one of the play inputs:
 - (ib) ~~provide the player with an opportunity to perform at least one~~ perform a play of ~~the at least one game;~~ and
 - (ii) provide at least one of a plurality of different outcomes based on the play, at least one of the outcomes corresponding to an award, the award having a value; ~~for a period of time, the period of time being divisible into a plurality of time intervals, the at least one play involving a chance to receive at least one of a plurality of awards, each one of the awards having a value;~~
- (e) ~~track how many of the time intervals pass during the at least one play of the game;~~
- (3d) for each time interval which expires during the game session, deduct one of the fees from the ~~balance~~value total ~~for each one of~~

- ~~time intervals which passes, the deduction being independent of any the play inputs and the game outcomes;~~
- ~~(e) track a balance, the balance being based on the value total minus the deducted fees;~~
- (4f) for each one of the provided outcomes which corresponds to one of the awards, adding the value of add the value of any received the award to the balance, the added value extending the activation period of the game session;
- (e) determine which one of a plurality of events occurs first, the events including:
- (1) a termination input received from the player; and
- (2) the balance falling below a minimum level required for playing the game;
- (f) continue the activation of the game session until the determined event occurs; and
- ~~(g) as long as the balance remains above a level, continue to perform steps (b) through (f) until a termination event occurs;~~
- ~~(h) after the termination event occurs, determine whether any payout is due to the player based on the balance; and~~
- ~~(i) provide the determined payout, if any, to the player.~~
- (g) provide a payout to the player in response to the termination input being received when the balance is above zero.

Claim 52 (currently amended): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein for each one of the time intervals, said fees ~~deducted from the value total~~ are equal to each other.

Claim 53 (previously presented): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein each time interval is an equal interval of time.

Claim 54 (canceled).

Claim 55 (currently amended): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein when executed by the at least one processor, the plurality of instructions cause the at least one processor to operate with the at least one display device to indicate ~~determine and display the~~ at least one payout. ~~associated with at least one displayed outcome for at least one play of the game if the balance is greater than zero after the plurality of time intervals, wherein said determined payout is based on the balance.~~

Claim 56 (currently amended): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein when executed by the at least one processor, the plurality of instructions cause the at least one processor to: (a) receive a pause input; and (b) stop the deduction at least temporarily in response to the pause input ~~during the play.~~

Claim 57 (withdrawn): A gaming system comprising:

at least one display device;

at least one input device;

at least one processor; and

at least one memory device which stores a plurality of instructions, which when executed by the at least one processor, cause the at least one processor to operate with the at least one display device and the at least one input device to:

(a) display to a player a graphical indicator of an amount of time the player is eligible to play a game;

(b) display to the player a decrease in said amount of time the player is eligible to play the game, wherein said displayed decrease is based on an amount of elapsed time;

(c) if the player inputs a value amount, display to the player an increase in said amount of time the player is eligible to play the game; and

(d) if the graphical indicator indicates that the player is eligible to play the game and a random determination occurs to trigger the game, determine and display a displayed outcome for said triggered game.

Claim 58 (withdrawn): The gaming system of Claim 57, wherein when executed by the at least one processor, the plurality of instructions cause the at least one processor to display the amount of time the player is eligible to play the game as a group of bars.

Claim 59 (withdrawn): The gaming system of Claim 57, wherein when executed by the at least one processor, the plurality of instructions cause the at least one processor to display a first amount of time the player is eligible to play the game a first color and display a second amount of time the player is eligible to play the game a second, different color.

Claim 60 (currently amended): The method of Claim 42, which includes varying the balance with time. ~~wherein the termination event includes an election by the player to terminate the at least one play of the game.~~

Claim 61 (currently amended): The method of Claim 42, ~~wherein~~ which includes automatically extending the activation period of the game session in response to each provided outcome which corresponds to one of the awards. ~~the termination event includes a satisfaction of a termination condition other than: (a) an expiration of a designated period of time; or (b) a use of a designated number of plays.~~

Claim 62 (currently amended): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein the balance is a time-varying balance. ~~termination event includes an election by the player to terminate the at least one play of the game.~~

Claim 63 (currently amended): The gaming system of Claim 51, wherein when executed by the at least one processor, the plurality of instructions cause the at least one processor to automatically extend the activation period of the game session in response to each provided outcome which corresponds to one of the awards. ~~wherein the termination event includes a satisfaction of a termination condition other than: (a) an expiration of a designated period of time; or (b) a use of a designated number of plays.~~

Claim 64 (new): A gaming system comprising:

a display device;

an input device;

a processor; and

a memory device which stores a plurality of instructions, which when executed by the processor, cause the processor to operate with the display device and the input device to:

- (a) receive a wager amount from a player for a game session;
- (b) determine an activation time based on the wager amount;
- (c) during the activation time:
 - (1) receive a plurality of play inputs from a player;
 - (2) in response to each one of the play inputs:
 - (i) display a game play; and
 - (ii) provide an award as a result of a winning event;
 - (3) determine an extension time period based on each one of the provided awards;
 - (4) extend the activation time by each one of the extension time periods;
- (d) continue the game session until one of a plurality of events occurs first, the events including:
 - (1) a termination input from the player; and
 - (2) expiration of the activation period including any of the extension time periods; and
- (e) as a result of the first event being the termination input:
 - (1) determine an amount of remaining time of the activation period;
 - (2) determine a payout based on the remaining amount of time; and
 - (3) provide the payout to the player.

Claim 65 (new): The gaming system of Claim 64, wherein the memory device includes a plurality of instructions which, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to operate with the at least one display device to indicate the payout.

Claim 66 (new): The gaming system of Claim 64, wherein the memory device includes a plurality of instructions which, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to operate with the at least one display device to: (a) receive a pause input from the player; and (b) pause the activation period at least temporarily in response to the pause input.